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ABSTRACT

As part of a Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Central Missouri State University is redesigning its 28-hour Secondary Professional Sequence (required for secondary education majors). The department identified and developed 45 teaching competencies reflecting 7 general goals and specific measurable outcomes for its teacher education graduates. A survey incorporating a 4-point Likert-type scale reflecting each of the 45 teaching competencies was mailed to 200 public school teachers and administrators. The purpose of the research was to identify those competencies considered important by professional educators and to examine the differences between teachers' and administrators' perceptions of what is important for an effective teacher. Findings provided the department some validation of those competencies it considers important for educators and some insight into what teachers and administrators consider important for an individual to be an effective teacher. It was recommended that perceptions and opinions of local teachers should be considered when evaluating its programs. Additional respondent comments, a copy of the survey, and 17 references are included. (LL)

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AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHING COMPETENCIES OF SECONDARY EDUCATORS: DO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AGREE ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

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A RESEARCH REPORT PREPARED FOR THE MISSOURI UNIT
OF THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS
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ABSTRACT

An Analysis of Teaching Competencies of Secondary Educators:

Do Teachers and Administrators Agree on What is Important?

As part of a federal grant titled "Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE), the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Central Missouri State University attempted to identify the relevance of 45 identified competencies. A survey incorporating a four point Likert-type scale reflecting each of the 45 teaching competencies was mailed to 200 public school teachers and administrators. The mean scores of the two groups were statistically treated with a t-test of Independent Measures. An alpha level of .05 was established for the purpose of identifying statistical significance. The study revealed that only five competencies were rated low by both groups. The study also revealed that 12 competencies were perceived significantly different by teachers and administrators. Additional respondent comments as well as a copy of the survey are provided.

An Analysis of Teaching Competencies of Secondary Educators:

Do Teachers and Administrators Agree on What is Important?

Introduction:

In response to NCATE assessment and as part of a federal grant titled "Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education" (FIPSE), the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Central Missouri State University is redesigning its 28 hour Secondary Professional Sequence (required for secondary education majors). FIPSE is similar to an Outcome-Based Education program built around the concept of a Continuous Process Improvement Model (CPI). At the heart of this model is the identification and establishment of measureable outcomes and the development of assessment instruments to provide evidence of student achievement of these outcomes. This model is also built on the idea that the education of a student is a developmental/dynamic process in which measureable growth within the discipline takes place.

To accomplish this task the Department of C&I has identified and developed 45 teaching competencies reflecting seven general goals and specific measureable outcomes for each goal for its teacher education graduates. These objectives (competencies) were identified and developed through four major sources: (1) assessment and evaluation workshops at Alverno college, (2) the Performance Based Teacher Evaluation (PBTE), (3) the knowledge base established by the College of Education and Human Services at CMSU, (4) the mission and philosophy developed by the faculty of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at CMSU.

Procedure:

To identify the relevance of its goals and objectives to professional educators, The Department of Curriculum & Instruction mailed a survey with cover letter to 200 Missouri public school teachers and administrators. The mailing list was generated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and individual educators were randomly selected.

Following a pilot study of 25 respondents, the revised survey incorporated a four-point Likert-type scale addressing the degree of importance (1 = waste of time to 4 = absolutely essential) of 45 teaching competencies (see attached survey). The instrument consisted of 45 statements reflecting seven general competencies. The internal reliability of the instrument was established through a Cronbach's alpha at .96 for administrators' responses and .95 for teachers' responses.

A similar instrument format was used by Whitlock and Ducette (1989) in their attempt to identifiy the skills and competencies for secondary and elementary teachers of gifted students. They surveyed 65 teachers and asked them to respond to 63 competencies using a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = unimportant to 4 = very important).

The survey also contained a professional background information section to obtain a professional profile of the respondents. There was an 84% response rate from the teachers and a 90% response rate from the principals. This high reponse rate supports Cooper's (1973) contention that, ". . . most teachers are very willing to share their concerns and opinions about teacher education program goals and teacher competencies" (1973, p. 23).

The mean scores of the two groups were statistically treated with a t-test of Independent Measures. An alpha level of .05 was established for the purpose of identifying statistical significance.

The purpose of this study was to request assistance of public school teachers and administrators regarding the relevance of identified teaching competencies. Specifically, the study addressed two research questions:

Research Questions:

1. What are the perceptions of professional educators regarding the relevance of established competencies considered important by a teacher education department?

2. Is there a difference between what teachers and administrators consider important to be an effective educator?

Rationale:

This research reflects the national reform movement to provide more meaningful and effective instruction at all levels. As Woulk (1989) indicates (speaking on the establishment of the National Board) "For the first time in history, a national body with a teacher majority has defined what every classoom teacher should know and be able to do" (cited by Lathlaen, 1990, p. 51). This pattern is supported by Harthern and Rolle (1991) who state that in reponse to the excellence and accountability movements, many state departments of education, teacher training institutions, school systems and research agencies have identified what they consider to be desirable teaching behaviors and skills. Harthern and Rolle (1991) also state, "Demonstrating competency has been made a gatekeeper for entering teachers in many school systems" (p. 52).

Definitions:

For the purpose of this study the term competency was given consideration. The review of the literature revealed that competency was an imprecise term used frequently but with varied usage. It appeared to be used interchangeably with teaching skills, behaviors, effective instruction, etc. As Borich (1979) states, "Perhaps because its origins may have been more political than substantive, the term has yet to take on a single universally recognized meaning" (p. 77). This sentiment is echoed by Smith (1971) who states:

> Despite all of our efforts, we apparently have no generally accepted conceptual system, psychological or otherwise, by which either to formulate or to identify the skills of teaching . . . it is clear that research would be advanced measureably by a conceptual system for formulating and identifying teaching skill. (cited in Henderson & Lanier,

1973, p. 4)

Zahorik (1986) supports the notion that there are some teaching skills that all teachers should possess. "All teachers . . . ought to be able to give lucid explanations . . . be able to structure knowledge in a way that promotes understanding . . . be able to manage groups of learners. But beyond a few obvious skills such as these, identifying universal teaching skills is difficult because teaching skills emerge from one's conception of good teaching" (p. 21). As Zahorik further states, "If we accept that teaching skills are not independent of conceptions of good teaching and that there are multiple sets of skills, a problem arises: What teaching skills ought teachers acquire?" (p. 23).

As evidence of the definition variations, the literature revealed several models and conceptual approaches to teacher competency. According to Borich (1977), "A competency has come to stand for a skill, behavior, or performance expected of a trainee at the completion of training" (p 77). Borich's definition serves this study well operationally.

Cooper, Jones and Weber (1973) see three kinds of teacher competencies: (1) Knowledge competencies "What is it a teacher should know in order to be effective in teaching?" (2) Performance competencies "What is it the teacher should be able to do in order to be effective?" (3) Consequence competencies "What influence should the teacher have on pupil behavior?" (pp. 19-20). Cooper, et al. (1973) further indicate that teaching competencies should be stated, ". . . in terms of those understandings, skills and attitudes that would have an effect on the growth of the children" (p. 21).

Keller, Laut and Rausenbaugh (1992) attempted to validate critical teaching skills through an extensive review of the research related to teaching skills. They identified, analyzed and evaluated 132 different skills through various research sources to arrive at a model with 22 critical teaching skills stratified into three areas: (1) PREACTIVE SKILLS which included:

diagnosing skill levels, developing objectives, prescribing materials, time management, and planned repitition; (2) INTERACTIVE SKILLS which included: set induction, variety of instruction, use of advanced organizers, smoothness of transition, enthusiasm, using examples, cueing (verbal and non-verbal), higher order questions, divergent questions, probing questions, and (3) REFLECTION which was defined by Valverder (1982) as, ". . . the teacher examining his/her situation, behavior, practices . . . asking the question, 'What am I doing and why?" (cited in Keller, et al., 1992, p. 27).

Although there appears to be no consensus on effective teaching competencies, there is a constant and consistent call to identify them. Howsam, et al. (1976) state that little progress will be realized until teacher education develops into the curriculum a body of recognized teaching skills.

Cruickshank and Metcalf (1990) support this belief in stating, "It would seem professionally advantageous for teacher educator scholars to create some unifying conceptualization or taxonomy to provide a map of the territory that might guide curricular and instructional efforts" (cited in Keller, et al., 1992, p. 12). Keller, et al. (1992) further state, ". . . the first step toward improving teacher training is to identify and validate teaching skills which are known or believed to be critical" (p. 11). Cooper et al. (1973) agree that:

> It is the identification of agreed-upon generic teacher competencies (those which all teachers should be able to peform, no matter what their specialities) that really builds the core of any teacher education program . . . . The difficulties in specifying competencies often seem overpowering. However, many of the difficulties can be alleviated by careful preplanning and effective communication among those involved. The move from program assumptions to teacher competencies to specific instructional objectives must be viewed as crucial. (Cooper, 1973).

Although there has been a great deal of research related to defining and identifying teaching competencies, the review of literature indicated a void in research that compared teachers' and administrators' perceptions of what is important to be an effective teacher.

There has been research conducted to identify test construction proficiences and competencies of teachers. Pigge and Marso (1988; 1989) did extensive studies on principals' perceptions of the most common test construction errors of Ohio teachers.

Much of the research related to teacher/principal perceptions of teaching competencies is the result of program validations. Streifer (1986) attempted to validate 15 teacher competencies as part of the Connecticut Beginning Teacher Support Program. Peters and Crisci (1991) attempted to validate the Techniques of Responsive Intervention to Validate Effective Teaching (TRIVET) Program by surveying principals and their lead teachers. To validate the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS), Drummond, et al. (1989) compared principals' perceptions of beginning teachers with the teachers' self-perceptions. In most cases there was agreement between the teachers and the principals regarding what was perceived as important for effective teaching.

Teachers and their administrators do not always agree on what is important to be effective. Stewart, Lighari, and Gott (1983) attempted to verify the professional education competencies needed by teachers of vocational agriculture in Missouri as perceived by school administrators. They compared administrators' perceptions with those of agricultural educators. Stewart, et al. (1983) found, "The opinions of teachers in the categories of program planning, development, and evaluation; as well as instructitonal planning, and instructional evaluation were significantly lower than the administrators" (p. 26). No research studies were found which compared the opinions of secondary teachers and their local administators as they related to needed professional education competencies.

Additional concerns noted in the literature were that teacher education program requirements were often inconsistent with teacher education student needs. (Cooper, et al., 1973). Many teacher educators emphasize in their courses those things that seem important to them, but these perceptions often clash with those of the prospective teachers. (Fuller, 1967).

It was the purpose of this research to identify those competencies considered important by professional educators. As Reynolds (1992) indicates, "For the most part, research on teaching has been conducted by researchers interested in teaching rather than teachers interested in research. . . What teachers say is important to effective teaching and what researchers have studied and think is important often differ" (p. 2). Only through professional educators' input can improvement of teacher education programs take place.

Findings:

The first research question addressed the educators' views regarding established competencies considered important by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at CMSU. Those items are presented in the table below.

The second reseach question addressed the differences between teachers' and administrators' perceptions of what is important for an effective teacher. Table 1 provides a comparison of these perceptions item by item.

Table 1

A Comparison of Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of what is Important for an Effective Teacher

ITEM # Competencies	Principals (N = 90)		Teachers (N = 84)		t-Value	Probability*	ES**
	M	SD	M	SD			
1	2.99	.69	2.71	.76	-2.406	.0016*	.38
2	3.16	.69	3.15	.59	-0.469	.4691	
3	3.22	.60	3.14	.63	-0.924	.1858	
4	2.90	.67	2.84	.77	-0.551	.2948	
5	3.50	.60	3.41	.67	-0.953	.1799	
6	2.77	.67	2.88	.71	1.037	.1508	
7	3.48	.63	3.37	.58	-1.164	.1222	
8	3.42	.62	3.38	.58	-0.458	.3264	
9	3.64	.57	3.53	.62	-1.317	.0933	
10	3.57	.50	3.65	.60	0.318	.3748	
11	3.62	.53	3.50	.60	-1.414	.0887	
12	3.69	.51	3.59	.52	-1.279	.1098	
13	3.72	.50	3.77	.45	0.590	.2815	
14	3.46	.60	3.53	.57	0.836	.2068	
15	3.40	.60	3.34	.64	-0.662	.2581	
16	3.22	.72	3.08	.71	-1.368	.0858	
17	3.58	.58	3.45	.61	-1.394	.0807	
18	3.34	.66	3.42	.67	0.791	.2191	
19	3.77	.45	3.69	.49	-1.094	.1376	
20	3.40	.61	3.38	.54	-0.226	.4080	
21	3.23	.60	3.13	.73	-1.026	.1535	
22	3.92	.27	3.77	.42	-2.789	.0060*	.43
23	3.91	.29	3.71	.46	-3.443	.0010*	.52
24	3.82	.38	3.56	.57	-3.515	.0008*	.54

Table 1 (cont.)

25	3.83	.46	3.61	.63	-2.648	.0088*	.40
26	3.88	.33	3.93	.27	1.022	.1546	
27	3.61	.51	3.60	.54	-0.137	.4430	
28	3.89	.32	3.72	.48	-2.669	.0082*	.43
29	3.88	.33	3.78	.42	-1.784	.0624	
30	3.96	.21	3.89	.32	-1.671	.0926	
31	3.84	.36	3.66	.50	-2.726	.0072*	.41
32	3.34	.54	3.26	.63	-0.909	.1890	
33	3.34	.67	3.11	.34	-1.287	.1964	
34	3.35	.62	3.17	.61	-1.869	.0600	
35	3.40	.75	3.16	.73	-2.133	.0321*	.32
36	3.17	.66	3.17	.68	0.021	.5000	
37	3.48	.66	3.43	.61	-0.543	.2974	
38	3.71	.48	3.47	.55	-3.116	.0026*	.46
39	3.90	.34	3.76	.43	-2.410	.0162*	.36
40	3.73	.47	3.62	.51	-1.387	.1638	
41	3.38	.66	3.33	.55	-0.590	.2817	
42	3.43	.62	3.34	.57	-0.944	.1816	
43	3.48	.66	3.11	.73	-3.435	.0012*	.53
44	3.07	.70	2.84	.77	-2.032	.0410*	.29
45	2.96	.80	2.80	.80	-1.270	.1015	

*p <.05 Note: Two-tailed probability

**Effect Size

The table reveals five competencies (Item 1- M=2.85, Item 4 - M=2.87, Item 6 - M=2.83, Item 44 - M=2.94 and Item 45 - M=2.88) that were rated relatively low by teachers and administrators. Most items were regarded as important or very important (4 = absolutely essential) by both groups.

The table also indicates that 12 individual competencies were perceived significantly

different by teachers and administrators. To determine if these items were of practical significance, the Effect Size for each item was computed (Borg, 1991). Effect size is established by dividing the difference of the two mean scores by the average standard deviation. The criterion for significant Effect Size was .50. As noted from the table, three competencies (23, 24 and 43) are considered to be of practical significance.

Conclusions:

Overall, the professional educators, as a group, tended to agree with those competencies established by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at CMSU. The exceptions were in the areas of: (Competency 1) The teachers' ability to intergrate into professional practice, a knowledge of historical, philosophical, legal and sociological base of education in the United States; (Competency 4) The teacher can demonstrate a knowledge of the governance and financing of American Education; (Competency 6) The teacher can demonstrate a knowledge of professional organizations and learned societies and their purposes; (Competency 44) The teacher indicates an understanding of the importance of reading educational research and translating results into practice; and (Competency 45) The teacher can conduct formal and informal action research to address student learning and/or school improvement needs.

Of the 45 items representing competencies of an effective teacher, administrators responded higher on 38 of them than did teachers. These findings support the research by Stewart, et al. (1983) that administrators tend to rate professional education competencies higher than teachers. The areas that were both statistically significant and of practical significance were: (Competency 23) The teacher can implement a variety of effective teaching techniques - rated higher by administrators than by teachers; (Competency 24) The teacher can provide for individual student differences - rated higher by administrators than by teachers; and (Competency 43) The teacher can utilized performance-based evaluation for

improving instruction - also rated higher by administrators than by teachers.

Additional comments below are representative of respondents (indicated verbatim including underlines and explanation points):

"Number 43 is not needed by really helpful"

"Number 33 at the secondary level, specialists are needed, classroom teachers do not have the class time to stop and help with reading unless after school"

"I think it is extremely important that teachers know the laws pertaining to child abuse!"

"I feel that more time should be spend researching methods in specific areas of instruction and in developing a repertoire of materials for classroom activities . . . performing well in your subject area is most important!"

"Teachers should go out ready to teach. Know state curriculum requirements in their area and have lesson plans ready for each area."

"1st year teachers need to have common sense - and how to get along with their colleagues, students, and parents. The new teachers have some strange ideas about life"

"If you want to improve your curriculum, I would suggest teaching less theory and become more involved in practical applications"

"Biggest problem I see is that CMSU and probably every other university does not address the problems peculiar to rural schools. I have six preps, many of my colleagues do, too.

"I felt foolish circling "4" for all subjects. However, all of these are important for a teacher to be a successful professional. I don't think all 45 are within the scope of a 4 yr. program.

"Additional time should be spent on classroom management and how to handle behavior problems in the classroom"

"Regular education teachers need a basic overview of special education, the referral process, and pre-referral strategies"

This study provided the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at CMSU some validation of those competencies it considers important for educators. In addition, it provided the department some insight into what teachers and administrators really consider important for an individual to be an effective teacher. Any department or college of education should consider the perceptions and opinions of local teachers when evaluating its programs. After all, they are the constituents that hold us accountable.

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COMPETENCIES OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS
GOALS AND OUTCOMES FOR SECONDARY TEACHERS

A survey to identify the perceptions of professional educators regarding what should be taught by teacher educators

This survey is designed to gather data which should help the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Central Missouri State University, improve its teacher education program by identifying and analyzing what is considered important by its constitutents. Your help will be appreciated and your thoughtful responses important.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill out the following information (check mark) and respond to the statements that follow by circling the number that best reflects your opinion (**please note key**).

1. **Profession:** Administrator____ Secondary Teacher (9-12)____ Substitute Teacher____ Other (Specify)_____

2. **Teaching Exp**: First Year___ In Second Year___ In Third Year ___ Three Years +____

3. **Discipline:** English ____ Sciences _____ Math _____ Social Studies _____ P.E.__ Home Ec.____ Business Ed. ____ Music ____ Art ____ Foreign Lang. ____ Other___

4. **Are You a Graduate of CMSU?** Yes_____ No_____

---

* **Absolutely Essential**	**Somewhat Important**	**Not Important**	**Waste of Time**
4	**3**	**2**	**1**

***key**

Absolutely Essential = Teacher could <u>not</u> provide classroom instruction or fullfill the role of a professional educator without this competency (students could not learn from a teacher who has not obtained this knowledge)

Somewhat Important = Teacher could <u>not</u> perform at full potential without this competency (students could still learn and the teacher could still be successful - but not as effective)

Not Important = Teacher could perform quite successfully without this competency (Student learning would not be affected by teacher who is deficient in this information/skill)

Waste of Time = Do not teach this information any more - It is quite useless to today's teachers (whether or not teacher had this information would have no effect on student learning or teachers' professionalism or effectivenes)

---

1. The teacher can demonstrate and integrate into professional practice a knowledge of historical, philosophical, legal and sociological base of education in the United States. **4 3 2 1**

Absolutely Essential 4	Somewhat Important 3	Not Important 2	Waste of Time 1

2. The teacher can demonstrate a knowledge of the impact of society on schools, and of schools on society. 4 3 2 1

3. The teacher can demonstrate a knowledge of the multicultural nature of American society and education. 4 3 2 1

4. The teacher can demonstrate knowledge of the governance and financing of American education. 4 3 2 1

5. The teacher has developed a knowledge of the teaching profession, including the roles and responsibilities of school personnel. 4 3 2 1

6. The teacher can demonstrate a knowledge of professional organizations and learned societies, and their purposes. 4 3 2 1

7. The teacher can demonstrate knowledge of the importance of professional collaboration and cooperation to enhance student learning. 4 3 2 1

8. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of and skill in shared leadership roles to improve school learnings for students. 4 3 2 1

9. The teacher can relate life-long growth and development (physical, social, intellectual and emotional) to curriculum, teaching and learning. 4 3 2 1

10. The teacher can demonstrate knowledge of exceptional conditions or children and suggest designs for instructional effectiveness. 4 3 2 1

11. The teacher can demonstrate knowledge of teacher characteristics and behaviors as they impact the learner. 4 3 2 1

12. The teacher can engage in in-depth decision-making and strategies concerning growth and development as applied to teaching and learning. 4 3 2 1

13. The teacher can demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes designed to enhance student self-esteem. 4 3 2 1

14. The teacher can demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes designed to promote constructive interaction among people of differing economic, social, racial, sex, handicap, ethnic, age and religious backgrounds. 4 3 2 1

15. The teacher can analyze issues relating to children-at-risk and the pertinent laws concerning child abuse and neglect. 4 3 2 1

Absolutely Essential 4	Somewhat Important 3	Not Important 2	Waste of Time 1

16. The teacher has examined and can recognize the impact of discrimination and bias, especially sexism and racism, on language, instructional materials, learning activities, learning styles, tests and measurements, and school environments. 4 3 2 1

17. The teacher indicates an understanding of the importance of following school district policies and procedures. 4 3 2 1

18. The teacher recognizes the importance of assuming responsibilities outside of the classroom as they relate to the school. 4 3 2 1

19. The teacher demonstrates a sense of professional responsibility. 4 3 2 1

20. The teacher can provide leadership in assuring appropriate professional values and practice. 4 3 2 1

21. The teacher can align professional practice with a personal, articulated professional philosophy. 4 3 2 1

22. The teacher can demonstrate appropriate preparation for classroom instruction. 4 3 2 1

23. The teacher can implement a variety of effective teaching techniques. 4 3 2 1

24. The teacher can provide for individual student differences. 4 3 2 1

25. The teacher can implement instructional objectives effectively. 4 3 2 1

26. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. 4 3 2 1

27. The teacher uses a variety of teaching materials instructional aids. 4 3 2 1

28. The teacher uses instructional time effectively. 4 3 2 1

29. The teacher demonstrates the ability to motivate students. 4 3 2 1

30. The teacher demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively with students. 4 3 2 1

31. The teacher provides students with specific evaluative feedback. 4 3 2 1

32. The teacher demonstrates ability to utilize technology effectively. 4 3 2 1

Absolutely Essential 4	Somewhat Important 3	Not Important 2	Waste of Time 1

33. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of teaching of reading. 4 3 2 1

34. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of assessment approaches and techniques and their effective use. 4 3 2 1

35. The teacher can engage in advanced reflective decision-making to incorporate more fully sound theory into quality teaching practice. 4 3 2 1

36. The teacher demonstrates the knowledge of incorporating vertical and horizontal articulation in designing curriculum. 4 3 2 1

37. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of behavior management systems. 4 3 2 1

38. The teacher can organize the classroom environment to promote learning. 4 3 2 1

39. The teacher can manage student behavior in a constructive manner. 4 3 2 1

40. The teacher demonstrates the ability to encourage positive interpersonal relations with students, parents and colleagues. 4 3 2 1

41. The teacher indicates the ability and motivation to guide own professional development. 4 3 2 1

42. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of professional ethics and the skills for diagnosing ethnical issues and making sound ethical decisions. 4 3 2 1

43. The teacher can utilize performance-based evaluation for improving instruction. 4 3 2 1

44. The teacher indicates an understanding of the importance of reading educational research and translating results into practice. 4 3 2 1

45. The teacher can conduct formal and informal action research to address student learning and/or school improvement needs. 4 3 2 1

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS: